

What is claimed is:

1. A method of marketing wherein a plurality of customers in a plurality of stores use wireless bar code reading terminals for reading bar codes related to products in the stores, the method comprising the steps of:

maintaining at least one database relating to shopping behavior for a plurality of customers; and

providing a product coupon to a customer in response to the reading of a bar code by the customer with one of the wireless bar code reading terminals by dynamically changing a characteristic of the product coupon based upon whether or not the customer is in the at least one database.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein, if the customer is therein, the dynamically determined characteristic of the coupon is based upon at least one entry in the at least one database.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the at least one characteristic is the amount of the coupon.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the at least one characteristic is the product for which the coupon is provided.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein the product is a product in proximity to the product associated with a read bar code.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of providing includes providing a coupon to the customer for the next shopping trip.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the at least one characteristic of the coupon is based upon whether or not the customer is identified and the level of identification.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the at least one characteristic is the amount of the coupon.

9. The method according to claim 1, further comprising paying a fee to a store by a product provider for

each coupon provided by the store for products of the product provider.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the fee is based upon the level of identification of the customer receiving the coupon.

11. The method according to claim 1, further comprising storing a shopping list and coupons on a terminal prior to entering a store.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the coupons are stored by reading bar codes thereon.

13. A system for marketing comprising:
a plurality of wireless bar code reading terminals for reading bar codes related to products in the stores;
at least one database relating to shopping behavior for a plurality of customers; and
a processor for providing a product coupon to a customer in response to the reading of a bar code by the customer with one of the wireless bar code reading

terminals by dynamically changing a characteristic of the product coupon based upon whether or not the customer is in the at least one database.

14. The system according to claim 13, wherein, if the customer is in the at least one database, the dynamically determined characteristic of the coupon is based upon at least one entry in the at least one database.

15. The system according to claim 13, wherein the at least one characteristic is the amount of the coupon.

16. The system according to claim 13, wherein the at least one characteristic is the product for which the coupon is provided.

17. The system according to claim 16, wherein the product is a product in proximity to the product associated with a scanned bar code.

18. The system according to claim 13, wherein a coupon is provided to the customer for the next shopping trip.

19. The system according to claim 13, wherein the at least one characteristic of the coupon is based upon whether or not the customer is identified and the level of identification.

20. The system according to claim 19, wherein the at least one characteristic is the amount of the coupon.

21. The system according to claim 13, further comprising a product provider processor for paying a fee to a store by a product provider for each coupon provided by the store for products of the product provider.

22. The system according to claim 21, wherein the fee is based upon the level of identification of the customer receiving the coupon.

23. The system according to claim 13, wherein the terminal has a memory for storing a shopping list and coupons.

24. The system according to claim 23, wherein the coupons are stored by reading bar codes thereon.

25. A method of marketing wherein a plurality of customers in a plurality of stores use wireless bar code reading terminals to read bar codes related to products in the stores, the method comprising the steps of:

maintaining at least one database relating to scanning point accounts for a plurality of customers; and

assigning scanning points to a customer in response to at least the reading of a bar code by the customer with one of the wireless bar code reading terminals and adding the scanning points to the scanning point account of the customer in the at least one database.

26. The method according to claim 25, wherein the scanning points are added in response to reading of a bar code and the purchase of the item represented by the bar code.

27. The method according to claim 25, further comprising cashing out the customer's scanning point account.

28. The method according to claim 27, wherein the step of cashing out the scanning point account comprises printing a voucher.

29. The method according to claim 25, further comprising providing access to the database by a customer over the Internet.

30. A system for marketing comprising:
a plurality of wireless bar code reading terminals to read bar codes related to products in the stores;
at least one database relating to scanning point accounts for a plurality of customers; and
a processor for assigning scanning points to a customer in response to at least the reading of a bar code by the customer with one of the wireless bar code reading terminals and adding the scanning points to the scanning point account of the customer in the at least one database.

31. The system according to claim 30, wherein the scanning points are added in response to reading of a bar code and the purchase of the item represented by the bar code.

32. The system according to claim 30, wherein the processor cashes out the customer's scanning point account in response to a request by the customer.

33. The system according to claim 32, wherein the processor cashes out the scanning point account and effects the printing of a voucher.

34. The system according to claim 30, further comprising a server for providing access to the database by a customer over the Internet.

35. A method of marketing wherein a plurality of customers in a plurality of stores use wireless bar code reading terminals to read bar codes related to products in the stores, the method comprising the steps of:

maintaining at least one database relating to the products; and

assigning a prize to at least one product in the database;

providing the prize to a customer in response to at least the reading of a bar code by the customer associated with the at least one product.

36. The method according to claim 35, wherein the prize is a coupon.

37. The method according to claim 35, wherein the prize is scanning points added to an account of the customer.

38. A system for marketing comprising:

a plurality of wireless bar code reading terminals for reading bar codes related to products in stores;

at least one database relating to the products;

and

a processor for assigning a prize to at least one product in the database and providing the prize to a

customer in response to at least the reading of a bar code by the customer associated with the at least one product.

39. The system according to claim 38, wherein the prize is a coupon.

40. The system according to claim 38, wherein the prize is scanning points added to an account of the customer.

41. A method of marketing wherein a plurality of customers in a plurality of stores use wireless bar code reading terminals to read bar codes related to products in the stores, the method comprising the steps of:

maintaining at least one database of customer accounts having information related to at least one of present customer coupons, future customer coupons and present customer scanning points; and

displaying on the customer's terminal an indication of the status of the customer's account.

42. The method according to claim 41, wherein the account has information relating to at least two of present customer coupons, future customer coupons and present customer scanning points.

43. The method according to claim 41, wherein the account has information relating to all three of present customer coupons, future customer coupons and present customer scanning points.

44. A system for marketing comprising:

a plurality of wireless bar code reading terminals to read bar codes related to products in stores;

at least one database of customer accounts having information related to at least one of present customer coupons, future customer coupons and present customer scanning points; and

a display on the customer's terminal for displaying an indication of the status of the customer's account.

45. The system according to claim 44, wherein the account has information relating to at least two of present customer coupons, future customer coupons and present customer scanning points.

46. The system according to claim 44, wherein the account has information relating to all three of present customer coupons, future customer coupons and present customer scanning points.

47. A message delivery system having a product information distribution system for transmitting at least one coupon to a selected portable terminal having a bar code reader upon the reading by the bar code reader of a bar code associated with a product and comprising a processor for recording the identity of coupons delivered to the selected terminal and the number thereof.

48. A shopping method comprising the steps of:
providing a terminal station at the entrance of a store having a plurality of wireless bar code reading

terminals having rechargeable batteries therein, wherein the terminals are mounted for removal by a customer;

charging the batteries of the terminals at the terminal station when mounted; and

permitting charged terminals to be removed for use by customers and preventing uncharged terminals from being removed by customers.

49. The method according to claim 48, further comprising entering the identification of the customer by reading a customer card bar code with a removed terminal.

50. The method according to claim 49, further comprising a database of customers and shopping information relating thereto including at least one of current coupons, future coupons and scanning points.

51. The method according to claim 50, further comprising informing the customer of the status of at least one of current coupons, future coupons and scanning points.

52. The method according to claim 48, further comprising providing coupons to the customer based upon bar codes read by the terminal.

53. The method according to claim 48, further comprising providing future coupons to the customer based upon bar codes read by the terminal.

54. The method according to claim 48, further comprising providing scanning points to the customer based upon bar codes read by the customer.

55. The method according to claim 48, further comprising indicating when a terminal leaves the store by emitting an audible signal.

56. The method according to claim 55, wherein the terminal includes an electronically activated surveillance circuit causing a beep when the terminal leaves the store.

57. The method according to claim 48, wherein the terminals communicate using Spectrum 24 and wherein the

terminal emits an audible alarm when the terminal no longer senses Spectrum 24.

58. A shopping system comprising:

a terminal station at the entrance of a store having a plurality of wireless bar code reading terminals having rechargeable batteries therein, wherein the terminals are mounted for removal by a customer;

a circuit for charging the batteries of the terminals at the terminal station when mounted; and

a locking system for permitting charged terminals to be removed for use by customers and preventing uncharged terminals from being removed by customers.

59. The system according to claim 58, wherein the terminals enter the identification of the customer by reading a customer card bar code upon removal.

60. The system according to claim 59, further comprising a database of customers and shopping information relating thereto including at least one of current coupons, future coupons and scanning points.

61. The system according to claim 60, further comprising a processor for informing the customer of the status of at least one of current coupons, future coupons and scanning points.

62. The system according to claim 58, wherein the processor provides coupons to the customer based upon bar codes read by the terminal.

63. The system according to claim 58, wherein the processor provides future coupons to the customer based upon bar codes read by the terminal.

64. The system according to claim 58, wherein the processor provides scanning points to the customer based upon bar codes read by the customer.

65. The system according to claim 58, further comprising a circuit for indicating when a terminal leaves the store by emitting an audible signal.

66. The system according to claim 65, wherein the terminal includes an electronically activated surveillance circuit causing a beep when the terminal leaves the store.

67. The system according to claim 58, wherein the terminals communicate using Spectrum 24 and wherein the terminal emits an audible alarm when the terminal no longer senses Spectrum 24.

68. A shopping method comprising the steps of:

scanning bar codes associated with products with a wireless bar code reading terminal in a store and storing data relating to product coupons at the terminal;

reading a bar code associated with a register; and

downloading the data relating to the coupons to the register.

69. A shopping system comprising:

a plurality of wireless bar code reading terminals in a store and each having a memory for storing data relating to product coupons for bar codes read on associated products;

a bar code associated with a register for reading by a terminal; and

a processor for downloading the data relating to the coupons to the register.

70. A shopping method comprising the steps of:

scanning bar codes associated with products with a wireless bar code reading terminal in a store and storing data relating to product coupons in the terminal;

placing the terminal in a receptacle when finished shopping; and

printing out product coupons corresponding to the data in the terminal.

71. The method according to claim 70, wherein the receptacle is at a checkout register.

72. The method according to claim 70, further comprising providing a terminal station at the entrance of a store for a plurality of the wireless bar code reading terminals, wherein each terminal is mounted in the receptacle for removal and replacement by a customer.

73. A shopping system comprising:

a plurality of wireless bar code reading terminals for reading bar codes associated with coupons and products and storing bar code data relating thereto in the terminal;

a plurality of cash registers each having a bar code scanner connected thereto for inputting bar codes associated with products to be purchased and bar codes relating to coupons; and

a scanner wedge connected to each bar code scanner for receiving bar code data from the terminal and inputting same into the cash register, wherein the scanner wedge and terminal have a wireless communication interface.

74. The system according to claim 73, wherein the wireless communication protocol is Spectrum 24.

75. A shopping method comprising the steps of:

providing a terminal station in a store having a plurality of wireless bar code reading terminals, wherein each terminal is mounted for removal and replacement by a customer;

receiving bar code data from the terminals associated with coupons and products in a bar code data database; and

printing out batches of coupons associated with the bar code data from the terminals on a periodic basis.

76. The method according to claim 75, wherein the batches comprise consolidated sheets of coupons.

77. The method according to claim 76, wherein the batches comprise sorted sheets of coupons.

78. The method according to claim 75, wherein the batches are printed daily.

79. The method according to claim 75, wherein the printing out is performed at the terminal station.

80. A shopping system comprising:

a terminal station in a store having a plurality of wireless bar code reading terminals, wherein each

terminal is mounted for removal and replacement by a customer;

a bar code data database for receiving bar code data from the terminals associated with coupons and products; and

a printer for printing out batches of coupons associated with the bar code data from the terminals on a periodic basis.

81. The system according to claim 80, wherein the batches comprise consolidated sheets of coupons.

82. The system according to claim 81, wherein the batches comprise sorted sheets of coupons.

83. The system according to claim 80, wherein the batches are printed daily.

84. The system according to claim 80, wherein the printing out is performed at the terminal station.

85. A method of marketing wherein a plurality of customers in a plurality of stores use wireless scanning terminals to read bar codes related to products in the stores, the method comprising the steps of:

maintaining at least one database relating to coupons for products; and

providing a product coupon to a customer in response to the reading of a bar code by the customer with one of the wireless scanning terminals by dynamically changing a the amount of the product coupon.

86. The method according to claim 85, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the location of the store.

87. The method according to claim 85, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the type of store.

88. The method according to claim 85, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the time of year.

89. The method according to claim 85, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the time of day.

90. The method according to claim 85, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the day of the week.

91. The method according to claim 85, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the month of the year.

92. The method according to claim 85, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the type of terminal.

93. The method according to claim 85, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the terminal IP address.

94. The method according to claim 85, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon a UPC bar code being read.

95. A system for marketing comprising:
a plurality of wireless scanning terminals to read bar codes related to products in stores;

at least one database relating to coupons for products; and

a processor for providing a product coupon to a customer in response to the reading of a bar code by the customer with one of the wireless scanning terminals by dynamically changing a the amount of the product coupon.

96. The system according to claim 95, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the location of the store.

97. The system according to claim 95, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the type of store.

98. The system according to claim 95, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the time of year.

99. The system according to claim 95, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the time of day.

100. The system according to claim 95, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the day of the week.

101. The system according to claim 95, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the month of the year.

102. The system according to claim 95, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the type of terminal.

103. The system according to claim 95, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon the terminal IP address.

104. The system according to claim 95, wherein the amount of the coupon is based upon a UPC bar code being read.

105. A shopping method in a store having a point of sale system including bar code scanners, cash registers and a product database, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a terminal station in a store having a plurality of wireless bar code reading terminals, wherein each terminal is mounted for removal and replacement by a customer;

receiving bar code data from the terminals associated with coupons in a coupon database; and
printing out coupons associated with the bar code data from the terminals independent of the point of sale system.

106. The method according to claim 105, wherein the coupon database is independent of the product database.

107. A shopping system in a store having a point of sale system including bar code scanners, cash registers and a product database, comprising:

a terminal station in the store having a plurality of wireless bar code reading terminals, wherein each terminal is mounted for removal and replacement by a customer;

a coupon database for receiving bar code data from the terminals; and

a printer for printing out coupons associated with the bar code data from the terminals independent of the point of sale system.

108. The system according to claim 107, wherein the coupon database is independent of the product database.

108. The system according to claim 107, wherein the coupon database is independent of the product database.